

REMARKS

Claims 11-15, 17, 20, 21 and 23-34 are pending in this application. Claims 11 and 21 are amended, and claims 28-34 are added. No new matter is added by this Amendment.

The Hechtl Reference

The Office Action rejected claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2002/0117194 to Hechtl. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 11 includes the feature of a door seal having a fixing area, a sealing element, a flexible sealing strip, and a sealing lip. The sealing lip is more flexible than the fixing area and the sealing element, is attached to the sealing element, and presses against the door to create a seal with the door. In contrast, Hechtl does not disclose a sealing lip that is attached to a sealing element. The Office Action defined sealing element of Hechtl (groove-like mount 15) does not have a sealing lip attached to it. Further, groove-like mount 15 does not have a sealing lip attached to it that presses against a door to create a seal. Further still, groove-like mount 15 does not have a sealing lip attached to it that is more flexible than groove-like mount 15.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that Hechtl does not disclose each and every feature of claim 11 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §102(b) is inappropriate. As a result, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The Kim Reference and the Jordan Reference

The Office Action rejected claims 12-15, 17 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2005/0257816 to Kim in view of U.S. Patent Application Publication No. US 2005/0076938 to Jordan. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claim 21 includes the feature of a flexible sealing lip connected to and extending from the sealing element, the sealing lip being pressed against the inner surface of the door to create a seal with the door. The Office Action defined sealing lip (upper part 231 of bracket 230) of Kim cannot be a sealing lip because it does not seal anything. Upper part 231 simply

attaches bracket 230 to fixing parts 222, and there is no mention in Kim of upper part 231 acting as a seal. Upper part 231 is not pressed against the inner surface door 200 and does not create a seal with door 200. Upper part 231 is formed of a hard material and is a part of bracket 230 that mounts bracket 230 to hinge frame 220. Door liner 210 is a continuous piece that is behind bracket 230 in Fig. 2. Upper part 231 of bracket 230 does not contact door liner 210 and has no sealing effect. In addition, upper part 231 is not flexible, it is rigid (paragraph 0040). Applicants note that paragraph 42 of Kim (pointed to by the Office Action) concerns gasket 240, not upper part 231.

Claim 21 includes the feature of a flexible sealing strip. The Office Action defined sealing strip (lower part 235 of bracket 230) of Kim cannot be the claimed sealing strip because it is part of the Office Action defined sealing element (bracket 230) of Kim. The Office Action asserts that lower part 235 of bracket 230 of Kim corresponds to the claimed sealing strip and that bracket 230 of Kim corresponds to the claimed sealing element. However, claim 21 requires that the sealing strip connects the fixing area to the sealing element. Applicants submit that the sealing strip cannot connect something to the sealing element when the sealing strip is part of the sealing element. Also, Applicants could find no mention of lower part 235 being flexible. Applicants again note that paragraph 42 of Kim (pointed to by the Office Action) concerns gasket 240, not lower part 235.

The Office Action asserts that it would have been obvious to combine connecting portion 202 of Jordan with the device of Kim. Applicants disagree. It would not have been obvious to combine the connecting portion 202 of Jordan with the device of Kim because fixing the end of gasket 240 of Kim to the edge of tub 110 would interfere with the sliding sealing design of Kim. Further, major modifications to Kim would be required to allow the door to pivot without damaging the seal if the end of gasket 240 was fixed to tub 110. Applicants submit that the necessity of such major modifications would render such a combination non-obvious.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Kim and Jordan does not teach or suggest the features of claims 12-15, 17 and 21 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

The Office Action rejected claims 20 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kim in view of Jordan. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Claims 20 and 24-26 depend from claim 21. For at least the reasons discussed above in response to the rejection of claim 21, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Kim and Jordan does not teach or suggest the features of claims 20 and 24-26 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

The Kim Reference in view of the Jordan Reference and the Hahn Reference

The Office Action rejected claim 23 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kim in view of Jordan and U.S. Patent No. 5,566,954 to Hahn. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As explained above, Kim does not teach or suggest, for example, the feature of a flexible sealing lip connected to and extending from the sealing element. Neither Hechtl nor Hahn remedies the deficiencies of Kim.

Indeed, the Examiner does not allege that Hechtl or Hahn teaches or suggests the feature of a flexible sealing lip connected to and extending from the sealing element, as recited in independent claim 21.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Kim, Jordan and Hahn does not teach or suggest the features of claim 23 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

The Kim Reference in view of the Jordan Reference and the Thompson Reference

The Office Action rejected claim 27 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kim in view of Jordan and U.S. Patent No. 4,916,864 to Thompson. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

As explained above, Kim does not teach or suggest, for example, the feature of a flexible sealing lip connected to and extending from the sealing element. Thompson does not remedy the deficiencies of Kim.

Indeed, the Examiner does not allege that Thompson teaches or suggests the feature of a flexible sealing lip connected to and extending from the sealing element, as recited in independent claim 21.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of Kim, Jordan and Thompson does not teach or suggest the features of claim 27 and therefore rejection under 35 USC §103(a) is inappropriate. As a result, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request entry of the present Amendment and allowance of claims 11-15, 17, 20, 21 and 23-34. If the Examiner has any questions regarding this amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned. If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made.

Respectfully submitted,

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